



PEDESTRIAN AND TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FROM Erwin H. Mack, PTSAC Chair  
Colleen Mitchell, PTSAC Vice Chair

Date: August 28, 2011

Subcommittee: *Pedestrian Networks* (sidewalks and pedestrian crossings)

Subcommittee Chairperson/s: *Ramin Assa*

Other Participants: *Alan Migdall, Councilmember Valerie Ervin, Richard Romer,*  
Technical Advisors: *Rick Earp and Jeff Dunkel,*

**Subcommittee Charge:** (Describe what subcommittee was asked to do) *The PTSAC Chairman asked the subcommittee to investigate and report on the condition of the existing pedestrian networks in Montgomery County, identify common and prevalent issues and recommend solutions to improve pedestrian safety and walkability of the neighborhoods. The PTSAC Chairman had assigned this activity because of the comments shared by members of the public concerning the shrubs and vegetation blocking sidewalks, un-even sidewalks, lack of sidewalk connectivity, lack of adequate cross-walks at locations convenient to pedestrians, timing of traffic signals, and traffic signals not being "user-friendly."*

**Recommendations:** (What the subcommittee recommends to the PTSAC and/or for submission to the County Executive and the County Council): *In order for the subcommittee to have a broad understanding of typical and prevalent issues with pedestrian networks, it needs a survey of County's pedestrian networks and a place to record, map and display their conditions. Because there is no current inventory and map of the County's pedestrian networks, and the County's sidewalk program is mostly reactive – building sidewalks where members of the public request them - there is little opportunity for systematic improvement of the County's pedestrian networks. Consequently, the subcommittee recommends the County develop a pilot program to survey two typical urba-residential neighborhoods, where pedestrians frequently visit shopping, schools, public transportation, entertainment areas and other areas. The information can then be used to identify the deficiencies and the most needed improvements to render these pilot neighborhoods pedestrian accessible and safe.*

*The subcommittee recommends the following criteria to capture and record the condition of pedestrian networks: Surface conditions, lighting at night, width, ADA compliance, whether there is a sidewalk or not, vegetation or other objects blocking easy passage (shrubs, trees, utility poles, cars in driveways, parking meters, mailboxes, trash bags, ...), protection/buffers from vehicles, (guard rails, buffer zones to the curb (if any), distance between sidewalk and street), existence of crosswalks, distances between crosswalks, markings showing where crosswalks are, traffic signals request devices for pedestrians, locations of such devices for accessibility (easy access, visible, convenient location,...), length of time for the signal to change, length of time the signal stays in "walk", existence and direction of ramps at intersections, location of frequently visited sites such as schools, libraries, rec centers, shops, restaurants, house of worship, government offices, bus stops, metro, medical offices and hospitals, offices, restaurants, parks and recreational areas.*

Department of Transportation



The subcommittee also recommends portions of the survey be conducted in a wheelchair to identify overlooked issues for the disabled and mobility impaired, and also at night (for lighting) and in the rain (for runoff and drainage issues.).

The subcommittee recommends that the PTSAC vote and select two of the following areas (approximately ½ mile radius or ½ square mile area) for the survey, because of their proximity to major destinations, transportation networks and significant pedestrian traffic:

- ❑ **East Bethesda, Bethesda** - bounded by South side of East-West Highway to the South, West side of Wisconsin Ave to the West, North Side of Jones Bridge Road to the North (up to the medical Center Metro Station), and East side of Connecticut Ave. to the East. This area is within easy walking distance of two metro stations, the Walter Reed Medical Center, NIH, BCC High School and downtown Bethesda shopping, offices, restaurants, and several farmer's markets
- ❑ **West and East Hillandale** – located in East County Science Center Master Plan area with high transit usage, two schools, places of worship, pools, and many high-rise apartments. Area includes sidewalks that just end at certain points. It is bounded by Northwest Branch to the west; County line to the east; I-495 to the south; and FDA campus to the north.
- ❑ **Linden – Montgomery Hills – North Woodside area** – surrounding neighborhood of the Silver Spring. It is bounded roughly by I-495 to the north; Georgia Avenue and 16<sup>th</sup> Street to the east; and the CSX tracks to the west and south. Area is close to major roadways and includes a confusing 6-way intersection that presents pedestrian and vehicle conflicts.
- ❑ **Capital View Park** – area is located just south of Kensington (another Sector Plan area), and has a history of pedestrian collisions. Area is bounded by I-495 to the south; two parks to the east; Kensington to the north (Plyers Mill); and the CSX tracks to the west.

**Justification and Explanation:** Safe and walkable neighborhoods is a key measure of quality of life. The results of these surveys will help identify frequent issues with pedestrian networks in typical urban neighborhoods in Montgomery County. Using the information from these surveys, the County can then focus on these issues and enact long-term solutions or areas of focus. MCDOT can resolve specifically identified issues in these areas. Finally, if the pilot surveys are found to be cost-effective in identifying and resolving issues and maintaining pedestrian networks, the surveys can be expanded to other areas of the County in order to improve walkability of neighborhoods, safety of pedestrians, and overall quality of life.

Motion Approved by PTSAC: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_